

**REMARKS**

In accordance with the forgoing, claims 1, 6, 10, 12-16, 18 and 20 have been amended and claims 4 and 21-44 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Claims 1-3 and 5-20 are pending and under consideration.

***Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 112***

Claims 1-44 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 1 and 11 have been amended to more clearly set forth means for maintaining the stack within the connector. Claims 21, 28 and 31 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein, rendering the rejection of those claims moot. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

***Allowable Subject Matter***

Claims 4, 6-10, 12-20, 24, 26, 27, 29, 30 and 32-44 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, set forth in this Office action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 11 and 31 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, set forth in this Office action.

Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 4 and claim 4 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Claims 5, 6 and 10 have been amended to include the limitations of claim 1, Claim 11 has been amended to overcome the 35 U.S.C. 112 rejection, described above, and claims 12-16, 18 and 20 have been amended to include the limitations of claim 11. Therefore, the claims of the

present application are in condition for allowance as suggested by the Examiner. Accordingly, allowance of claims 1-3 and 5-20 is respectfully requested.

**Conclusion**

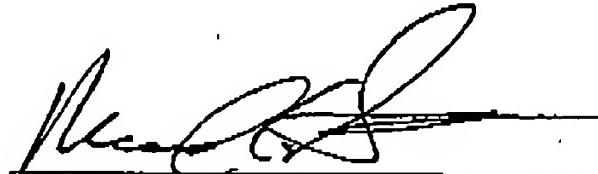
There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this Amendment, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned attorney to attend to those matters.

Respectfully submitted,

JOHN E. KAST ET AL.

December 21, 2004  
Date



Michael C. Soldner  
Reg. No. 41, 455  
(763) 514-4842  
Customer No. 27581